

**WINTER SAFETY 2010-2011**  
**THE USAG GARMISCH SAFETY OFFICE INFORMS:**  
**WINTER TIRE SAFETY**

As winter 2010 approaches, the USAG Garmisch Safety Office reminds motorists that German law regarding the use of winter tires has changed in 2006.

- The legal change, which took effect May 1, 2006, indicates, using tires **"suitable to the weather" is required**. Apart from other winter safety precautions, this mainly translates into putting on **"appropriate tires"**, and checking on the windshield wiper fluid. Driving with summer tires on icy or snowy roads can now be a traffic offense, which can lead to a fine of 20 to 40 Euros. The new changes are covered in article 2, paragraph 3a, of the German road traffic regulation.
- Drivers who obstruct or endanger traffic due to summer tires will definitely be ticketed.
- Additionally, insurance companies can deny coverage to motorists driving with summer tires on wintry roads. In the case of a traffic accident in adverse winter conditions, police can assign blame to a motorist without snow tires, regardless of who actually caused the accident.
- **Very important – in Austria winter tires are a requirement between 1 November - 15 April, fines are between 35 to 5000 Euros!**
- How do you know if tires meet the winter standard? **Tires labeled with "M+S" or with a "snowflake" are considered legal if their tread pattern is at least 1.6 millimeters. For best safety, however, winter tires with a tread pattern of less than 4 millimeters should be replaced.** Tires can be inspected for safety at tire shops or road service providers such as ADAC.
- Chains should be used if you plan to drive in heavy snow or ice. **A combination of summer tires and snow chains is not allowed.**

When should you begin using winter tires? **Under the new law, there is no set date; road and weather conditions dictate use.** Many experienced motorists put winter tires on at the first snow and leave them on until early spring. It's easier than changing back and forth and avoids the possibility of being stuck without the right tread if the weather suddenly changes for the worse. Historically, German roads begin to see snow around Thanksgiving.